



Office of the Child's Representative

Presentation to the Joint Judiciary Committee

January 25, 2022

OCR Mission

OCR gives children and youth a voice in Colorado legal proceedings through high-quality legal representation that protects and promotes their safety, interests, and rights.

Vision

Justice, opportunity, and healthy families for all court-involved children and youth.

Values

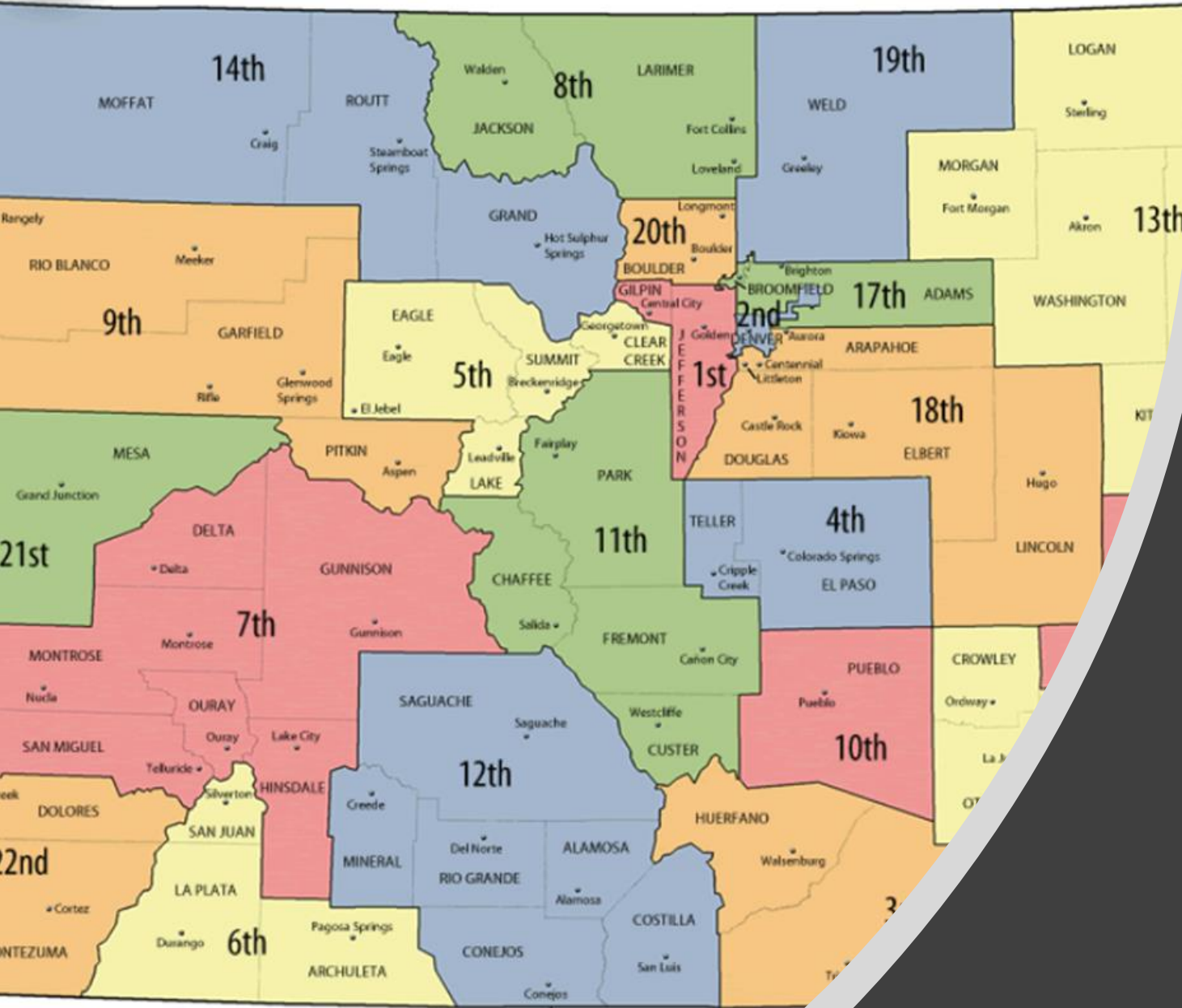
Accountability: Colorado's children, attorneys, families, and communities can count on OCR to ensure that each decision we make and action we take advances our mission in a fair, inclusive and transparent manner.

Efficiency: OCR strives to accomplish its mission and conserve resources by streamlining efforts, adhering to deadlines, resolving conflict constructively, and honoring well-defined projects, processes, and roles. We balance our drive to achieve with thoughtful planning and implementation.

Empowerment: OCR cultivates an environment of respect and honesty. We value the diverse experiences and expertise of the children we serve, our attorneys, and our staff. We invest time to reflect and connect, focus on strengths, value feedback, and recognize success. We stand for justice and support each other in our mission to empower children.



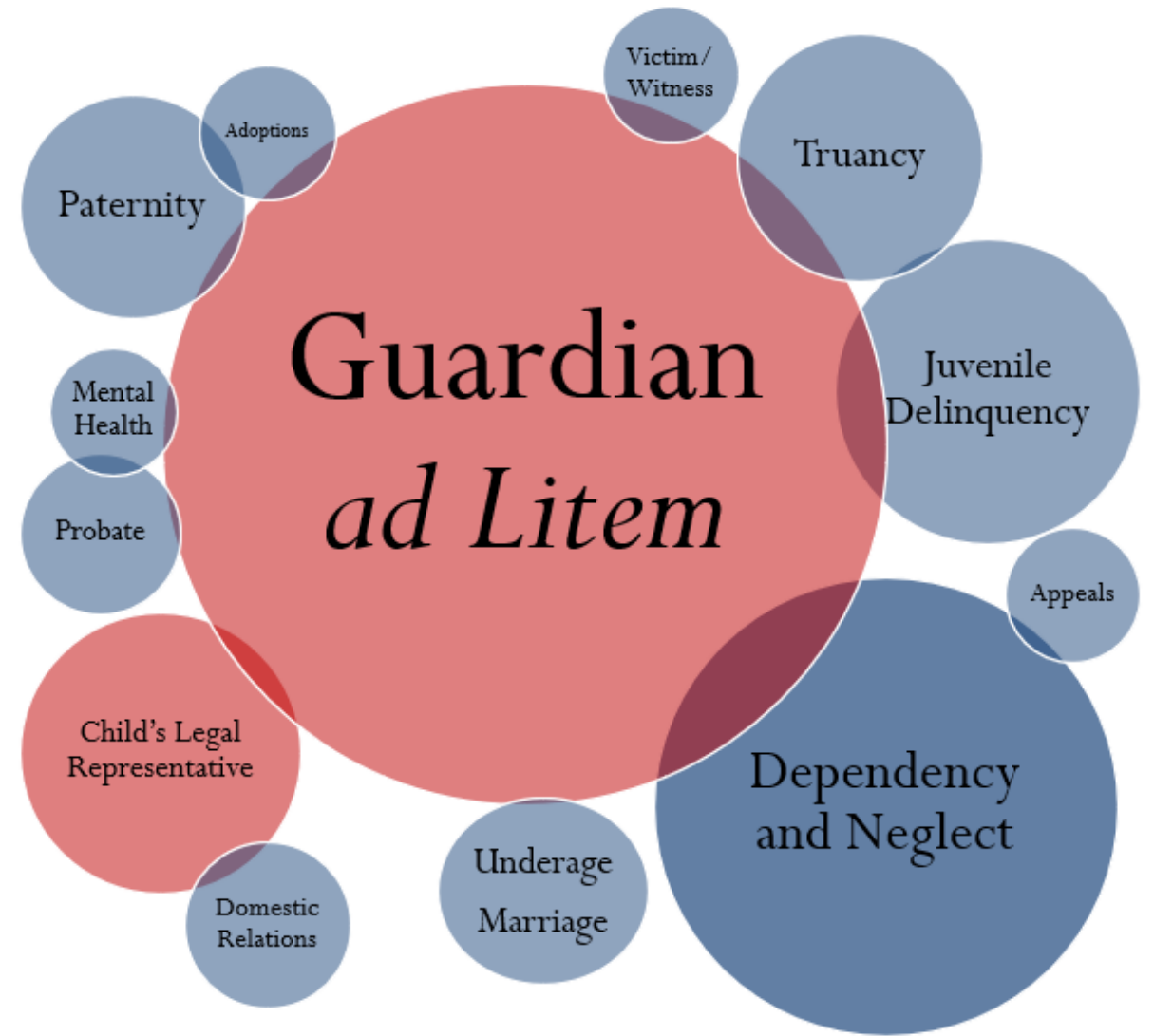
COLORADO JUDICIAL DISTRICTS



OCR contracts with
approximately 270
attorneys spanning
all 22 judicial
districts

Guardian ad Litem (GAL)

- GALs are attorneys who advocate for the best interests of every child/youth in Colorado named in a D&N petition throughout the entirety of the case.
- GALs in other case types are appointed at the discretion of the court.



Counsel for Youth

- Attorneys transition from a GAL to Counsel for Youth when a youth reaches the age of 18 in D&N cases.
- Foster Youth Transition Program.
- Therapeutic Privilege Advisement

OCR will elevate children's and youth's voice and rights in dependency and neglect (D&N) proceedings by successfully implementing changes enacted in HB21-1094 and pursuing an updated model of representation in the 2022 legislative session.

OCR Wildly Important Goal 2022

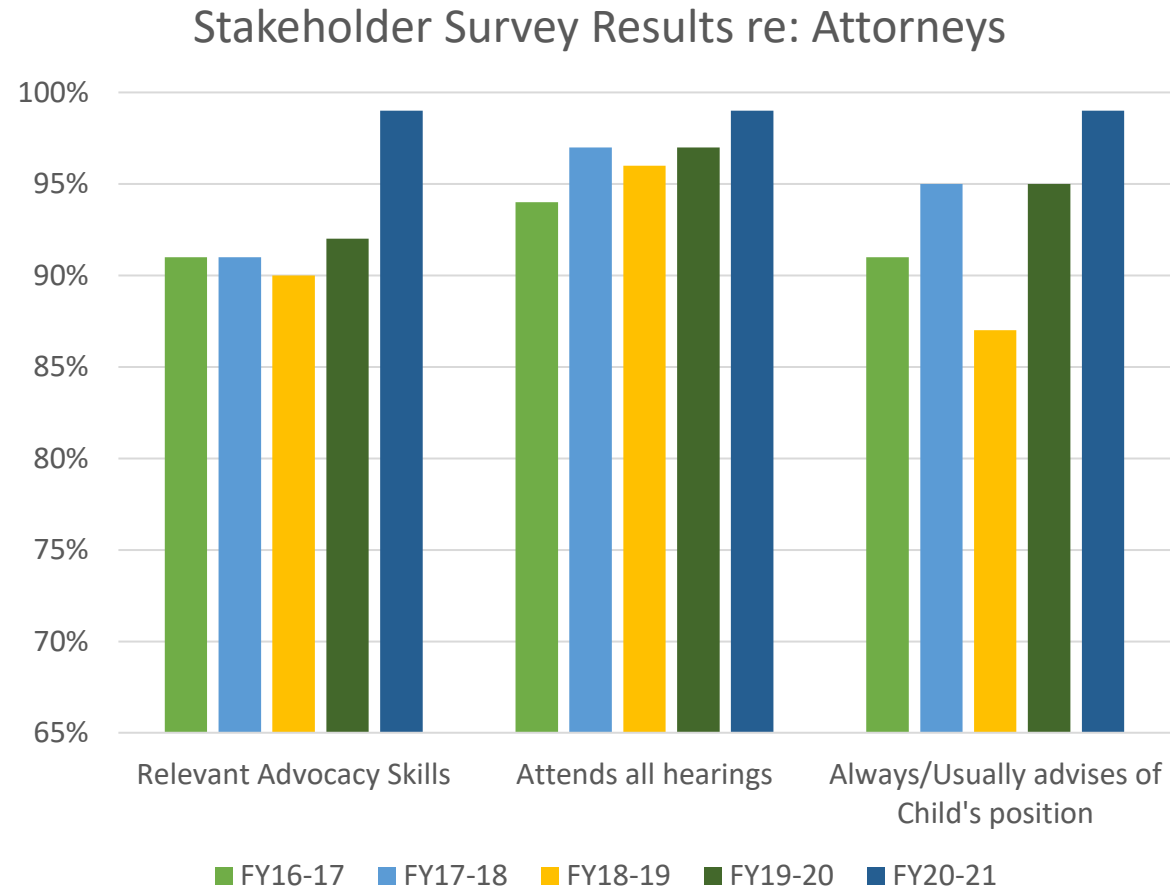
Provide children a voice in the Colorado legal system through effective and efficient attorney services and advocacy.

SMART Goal 1

GOAL 1: Provide children a voice in the Colorado legal system through effective and efficient attorney services and advocacy.

For FY21 the OCR:

- Conducted **278** references interviews (**86** from youth)
- **194** court observations
- In FY21, **97%** of initial 30-day visits with youth were completed.
- Received **349** Judicial Stakeholder surveys and **18** Youth Surveys
- Attended or sponsored **4** youth events.



ENGAGING **YOUTH** EMPOWERING



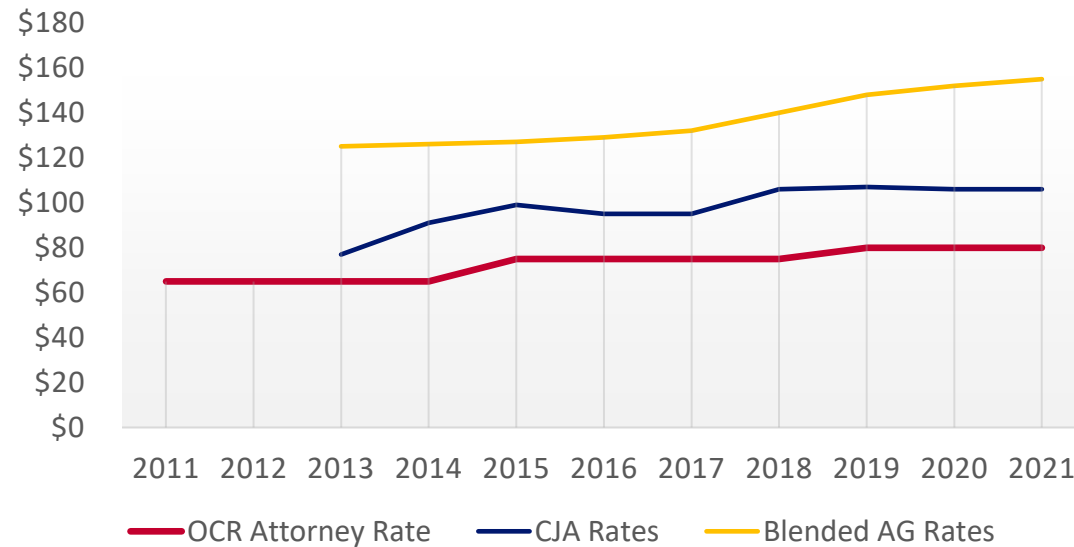
Colorado Office of the
Child's Representative

LEAP

OCR launched the Lived Expert Action Panel (LEAP) consisting of 12 young adults who have lived experience in the child welfare, juvenile justice and truancy systems.

Fair and Reasonable Compensation

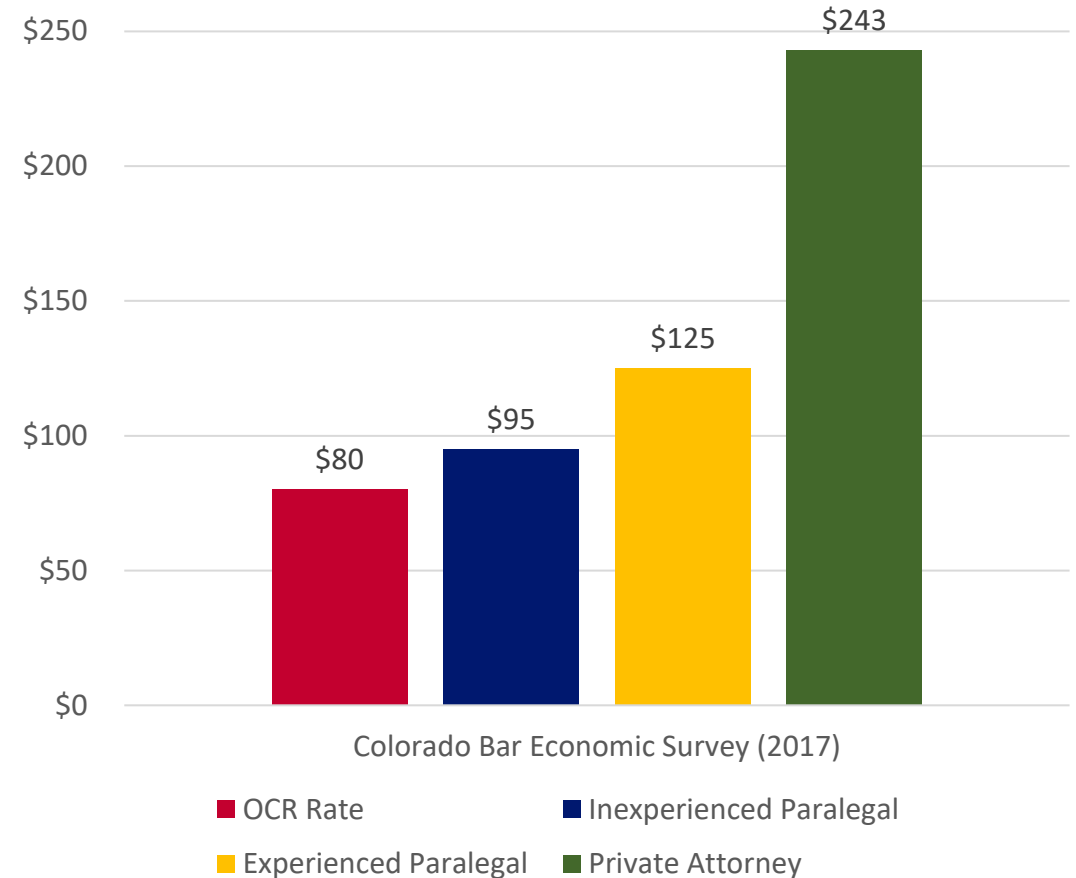
History of Rates



History of OCR Attorney Rates

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| 2009 to 2014 | \$65 |
| 2015 to July 1, 2018 | \$75 |
| 2018 to current | \$80 |

Private Sector



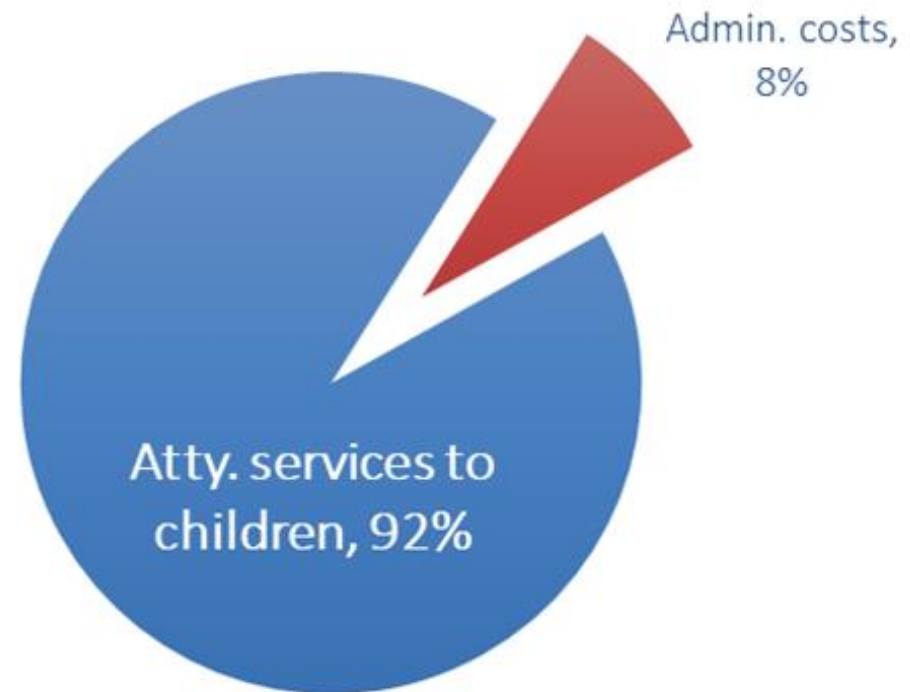
OCR will optimize efficiencies in attorney practice and billing.



SMART Goal 2

Administrative Expenditures

FY 2020-21 Administrative Expenditures



■ Atty. services to children ■ Admin. costs

The OCR will ensure attorneys and case consultants remain current in state and federal law and regulations, social science research, best practices in diversity and inclusion and evidence-based services.



SMART Goal 3



Statewide Training

- New DEI requirements
- In FY21 the OCR Provided 85 new CLEs
- Total of 378 hours of accessible CLEs online.
- 15 Mentoring pairs covering 7 judicial districts.

THE EQUITY PROJECT[®]

EQUITY · REDEFINED · ACTUALIZED.

OCR partnership in 2021

OCR worked with the Equity Project to provide training and conduct an institutional assessment.

FY23 Budget Requests

OCR Contractor Rate Increase



Juvenile Delinquency Staff Attorney

Second largest case type comprising **15%** of OCR's CAC expenditures and **31.4%** of OCR Appointments

Dynamic area of law that has changes drastically in the past few years and continues to evolve.

Need for more litigation support, training and resources.

Common Compensation Plan



Need to align entry and mid level salaries at OGAL



40% turnover in non-management attorney staff

Operations
Increase

Westlaw Price Increase

Website

CARES Enhancements



Legislative Agenda 2022

Client Directed Counsel for youth 12 & older in D&N cases.

“I trust her with my life at this point. Which I’m doing at this point, because it’s her word that’s getting me where I want to be.”

-A Youth’s Feedback about an OCR Attorney

Contact Us:

Our staff attorneys stay current on state and federal law and remain active in a wide variety of committees and workgroups. Our expertise in child welfare and juvenile law is expansive and we are active in committees and workgroups looking at the Children’s Code, FFPSA, ICWA, Juvenile Justice, Human Trafficking, Foster Care, etc. We are always willing to share our knowledge and provide legal research and analysis in areas that impact the work our contractors do or the children/youth they serve.

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